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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC 03671/86

National Intelligence Council

SP - 157/86  
5 August 1986  
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Acting Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Lawrence K. Gershwin  
National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs

SUBJECT: NSDD 219 Requirement for Net Assessments

1. This memorandum is to bring you up-to-date on the action on the Packard Commission recommendation for net assessments, based on my discussions with Andy Marshall. [REDACTED]

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2. Background. NSDD 219, Implementation of the Recommendations of the President's Commission on Defense Management (the Packard Commission) on April 1, 1986 requested, among other things, that the Secretary of Defense recommend to the NSC and OMB procedures for "a net assessment of US and Allied Forces as compared with those of possible adversaries. This net assessment will be used to evaluate the risks associated with various strategic options. Such net assessment will be prepared by the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Chairman of the JCS (with the assistance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.)" [REDACTED]

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3. On 24 March, in anticipation of the NSDD, DDI Gates sent you a memo (attached) suggesting how this task should be implemented, and also recommending a change from the Packard Commission recommendation that JCS do the job, to a joint DCI-SecDef effort (the NSDD has a 3-way joint effort). Also attached are talking points I prepared for you on 9 April for use at a SECDEF breakfast. [REDACTED]

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4. Current Status. The SecDef submitted the recommendations called for in NSDD 219 in the first part of July. His cover memo to Adm. Poindexter indicated that, in accordance with the guidance in NSDD 219, the SecDef had formed a Net Assessment Coordinating Committee. The timelines he attached to the cover memo indicate that the SecDef, CJCS, and DCI have a joint responsibility for net assessments. But nowhere is it described how that joint responsibility is to be met, nor the composition and duties of the Net Assessment Coordinating Committee. [REDACTED]

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SP - 157/86

SUBJECT: NSDD 219 Requirement for Net Assessments

5. The JCS appears determined not to get involved in the joint net assessment effort. They prefer that OSD continue its net assessment program as in the past and that the JCS perform independent net assessments without SecDef or DCI involvement. This is not in keeping with the guidance contained in NSDD 219, but the JCS apparently expects legislation this fall which will call for this sort of approach. [REDACTED]

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6. My own view is that JCS is, in essence, failing to comply with a Presidential directive, in part because they want to do such assessments without Intelligence Community and Office of Secretary of Defense involvement. There is a clear movement in Congress (Aspin and McCurdy, maybe others) for ordering net assessments provided to Congress by the Executive Branch; moreover, Aspin has asked for an independent evaluation from the JCS in his questions regarding the May 27 SALT II decision. It seems, therefore, that the JCS and Aspin, for different reasons, are headed toward common interests in a JCS-only net assessment. I have no idea what Adm. Poindexter's views might be, but there is no immediate prospect of a solution and there is no clear direction on how to proceed. [REDACTED]

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Lawrence K. Gershwin

Attachment:  
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9 April 1986

DCI TALKING POINTS  
(for use with SecDef)

IMPLEMENTING THE PACKARD COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON NET ASSESSMENT

- The President, in NSDD-219, has directed that SecDef shall recommend procedures for a net assessment of US and Allied Forces as compared with those of possible adversaries.
  - This will be prepared by SecDef, DCI, and JCS.
- The 1981 DCI-SecDef agreement on net assessments has governed two previous joint net assessments (1983 and 1985) on strategic forces.
  - Procedures in place are a good model for future net assessments: allow for a streamlined, less bureaucratic process.
- A complete, force-wide net assessment on an annual basis would be a very difficult undertaking, at least initially.
  - Therefore, I recommend we break the problem into more manageable, discrete pieces over the first few years of the new process.
  - Our efforts, then, would comprise four separate net assessments relative to the Soviets and their allies: strategic forces, NATO/Warsaw Pact, Southwest and South Asia, and East Asia.
  - These four separate pieces could be done on a rotating basis, either one or (at most) two per year. Because the forces on either side do not change dramatically from one year to the next, this should be adequate for planning purposes.
- I also recommend that we present our joint net assessments in summary-style format (less than 50 pages), rather than a more voluminous, detailed presentation. The 1985 strategic net assessment is a good model.
  - The effort should be managed by a relatively senior individual in each organization, operating fairly autonomously, rather than handled by normal bureaucratic procedures and extensive low-level coordination.
  - The resulting product would be more useful to a high-level audience, similar to the annual SecDef Posture Statement.
  - The greatest value of this approach would be as a frank assessment identifying relative strengths and weaknesses of the US and Soviet Alliances in conflict in these areas, and key trends.

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DDI 01564/86  
24 March 1986  
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: Packard Commission Recommendation on Net Assessment

1. You asked for my thoughts on the Packard Commission recommendation that the Chairman, JCS, with DCI assistance, should prepare a net assessment of the effectiveness of US and Allied forces compared to those of possible adversaries. As you know, we have a 1981 agreement between the DCI and the Secretary of Defense to jointly issue net assessments. The arrangement was used for the 1983 and 1985 strategic net assessments, with the project run jointly by Andy Marshall, Director, Net Assessment, Office of Secretary of Defense, and the National Intelligence Council, in this case, the NIO/SP. I think this arrangement for any future net assessments is preferable to working it with the JCS, as it allows a much more streamlined, less bureaucratic process. I would be very wary of going beyond that to directly involve NSC and State, or it would turn into an Interagency Group bureaucracy product in its worst sense. [REDACTED]

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2. I think there is a lot of merit in going beyond the strategic force net assessment. Moreover, pressure is mounting from Congress (Les Aspin and Dave McCurdy in particular) for the Executive Branch to provide such assessments to Congress. (They have read the strategic assessment.) There is also some interest in the Senate Armed Services Committee. [REDACTED]

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3. If we were to conduct some further efforts, the most natural way would be to examine the Soviet peripheral areas with three assessments: NATO/Warsaw Pact, Southwest and South Asia, and East Asia. Any such efforts will be big jobs and impose a significant burden on our analytic resources. In each case, however, the talent exists to be able to conduct our end of such a joint effort. Each would involve SOVA, one or more other DDI offices, NIO/GPF, NIO/USSR, and at least one other NIO; DIA would, of course, be heavily involved as well. Such projects should be sequential; it would be very difficult to carry out all three at once. [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Packard Commission Recommendation on Net Assessment

4. There are two obvious alternatives for carrying out such net assessments:

--An extensive, detailed project, arraying a large amount of data and analysis. This would be conducted by an interagency task force, with individual intelligence task force subgroups.

--A small (less than 50 pages) paper with the intelligence effort managed by one relatively senior individual.

5. If we conducted an extensive, rather voluminous net assessment, similar to the size of NIE 11-3/8, for example, the burden would be truly enormous. The CIA end of it might be 4-5 man years for the NATO/WP, 3-4 man years for the others, although these are only rough guesses. Moreover, we would put our best people on it, so that the burden is greater than the numbers would indicate. In fact, it would have a major impact on the DDI research program in the affected area. [redacted]

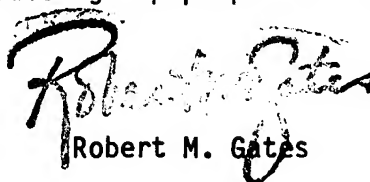
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6. On the other hand, a summary-style net assessment, while still quite difficult to carry out, could be accomplished with perhaps a 1 man-year effort, more conservatively, 1-2. If such a project were to run for 6-9 months, I would assign a senior analyst or branch chief to draft it, with assistance from the rest of the organization, and senior-level involvement of NIOs and office chiefs as noted earlier. [redacted]

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7. I strongly favor the summary approach. It is less of a burden, but more importantly, it is more useful to a high-level audience. It would not be a prediction of who would win a war in the region, although it would point out the key advantages of one side over the other. Its greatest value, however, would be as a frank assessment identifying relative strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet and US alliances in conflict in these regions, and key trends. Such a paper is difficult to write, but it can be done. Quality would be assured by giving it high-level backing and putting top people on it. [redacted]

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Robert M. Gates

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7 August 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Your Breakfast Meeting with Secretary Weinberger and  
Deputy Secretary Taft, Friday, 0745 in the DCI Dining Room

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TAB B Net Assessments. Last April NSDD 219 developed a new procedure to produce net assessments of US/Allied and adversary forces. It called for them to be produced jointly by the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Chairman of the JCS, and asked Weinberger to make recommendations for implementation.

- Weinberger's response was to create a Net Assessment Coordinating Committee but he failed to describe either its composition or its process.
- Meanwhile, JCS seems to be fighting the problem. It wants to continue its own independent net assessments without SecDef or DCI involvement. Rep. Aspin has asked JCS to do an independent assessment of the SALT II decision and JCS seems to think that legislation this fall offered by Aspin will call for JCS to provide independent net assessments, thus undermining NSDD 219.
- Our people would like you to raise this question with Weinberger, ask him what he is doing to implement the NSDD, and in general feel him out on what he thinks the JCS is doing. Before raising this with the Secretary, you might want to consider whether or not to talk to Poindexter about it. I don't think there is enough urgency behind this so it couldn't wait a week if you want to get his input first.
- At TAB B is a memo from Larry Gershwin providing some additional detail and talking points prepared for you last April regarding a new NSDD. Also a memo from Bob Gates to you last April talking about the whole net assessments problem.

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Executive Order 26,746

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TAB D Soviets Dangle 20% Defense Budget Cut. You might wish to raise with Weinberger  that Gorbachev has in his bag of tricks an offer of a joint 20% cut in U.S. and Soviet defense budgets.

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DCI/DDCI Executive Staff

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